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613 children are abhorred and every effort is made to get the woman married should she be pregnant. Although her shame is great, it is nothing compared to the problems that the new individual will encounter unless people come to accept his mother's agnatic kin group as his—and whether that group will in fact accept him as a member. The pariah status of illegitimate children is easily seen in the widespread belief that they can only marry others like themselves or people of slave status.

59 So much then for the first two features of kinship, those of genealogy and descent. The third aspect, that of marriage relations, brings us much closer to what is commonly thought of as family life in western society. Using the anthropological jargon, we can sum up the kinds of relations invoked by a Kanuri marriage by saying that Kanuri marriage is polygynous with virilocal residence patterns which have a patrilocal emphasis and an exceptionally high divorce rate. In plain English this means that the men can marry more than one wife, up to four by Islamic law (they are polygynous); the wife invariably leaves her home to go and live with her husband in a place chosen by him (they are virilocal); and, this often but not always proves to be in the vicinity of, or even inside, the household of the husband's father (there is a tendency toward patrilocality). Finally, most Kanuri marriages, the vast majority of them certainly, end in divorce.

[586] Because a marriage usually involves the creation of whole sets of kinship links where none existed before, the way in which such changes are brought about and made "official," or publically recognized, is an important aspect in the anthropological study of marriage. Furthermore, such activities are also very important moments in the lives of the individuals concerned, who must see to it that all that should be done is done correctly according to traditional custom. Thus we start looking at marriage by describing its inception.

• 581 In thinking about a marriage the first question that any Kanuri man asks himself is whether he can afford it or not. That is, can he and those people on whom he can count for financial aid take on the expense of a marriage ceremony and bridewealth payments; and, if he can, how high can he go?

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595 A man who already has a wife or wives knows that he must give gifts, supposedly equal to those going to the bride, to wives already married to him. He knows that the pressures for expenditures for drummers, food, transportation of the bride to his dwelling, and many other aspects of the ceremony, will very likely involve more of an outlay than he can readily predict. Can the capital be raised for such an undertaking? Most men are helped by their friends, their kin, and their political and economic patrons if they have any. Kanuri recognize the outcome of marriage expenses in their oft-quoted saying, "A man who is not in debt over a wedding is a man who has no friends."

583 Bridewealth payments form the basic marriage expense, and they can vary in size and elaborateness depending upon the status of the two family groups who are joined through the marriage, the marital history of the girl, the previous relationship of the groom to the girl's family, the bargaining power of each party to the marriage arrangement, and the time of year during which the payments are to be made. Although other factors can enter in and pull the bridewealth up or down in individual cases, these are the most effective determinants of bridewealth.

The payments themselves can be divided into three general categories, plus a "rebate." First there are one or more small gifts given to the girl and her rela-

tives, usually female relatives, in the name of the groom; these are called the *kwororam*, or the asking-a-question payments. Secondly, there are the formally recognized payments. The first of these is a large one called the *luwaliram*, given to the *luwali*, or the man who officially gives the bride to the groom and to whom she will return if she ever runs away or separates from her husband. This is followed several weeks later by a *sadd'u*, a small fee given to the girl's family through her *luwali* on the morning of the wedding day. And thirdly there are a number of small payments paid out to the girl and her young friends, to the female relative(s) who accompany her to the groom's house, and to any unmarried sister she has left behind. The groom receives a few small gifts from the girl's family, and on the morning of the wedding day when the *sadd'u* is paid, he receives gifts of money, clothes, and even on occasion a horse. He never knows beforehand, however, just how much or how little this "rebate" will come to in relation to his own outlay for the marriage.

When the status of the two families is similarly low, as it is in the vast majority of rural marriages, then there is very little worry over bridewealth. Generally it is not very high and almost standardized for the locality. An important man always pays more bridewealth because everyone believes he can afford it. Paying more for everything he does, including marriage, is one of the ways he validates or proves his higher social rank. An interesting insight is also gained when it is realized that not only is the status of the person getting married taken into account, but also the status of those whom he is associated with and whom he can count on for help. In our little town of Magumeri many people tried to have their daughters marry members of my household because, as they laughingly admitted, they knew I would help my household members with bridewealth, and my apparently wealthy status in Magumeri meant that payments could be set a good deal higher than usual for such a marriage.

No matter what the status of the two families may be, girls who have not been married before command a much higher set of bridewealth payments, and more of them. The magnitude is often three to five times as much and in extreme cases it goes even higher than that. Men tend to give more as they grow older and can afford it, while conversely women often receive less as they go from one marriage to the next. Kanuri say that a woman who has been married many times has been used a great deal and is therefore worth much less than others who have not had so many marriages and been used as much. On the other hand, if she remained with previous husband(s) for longer periods, has a reputation for quiet obedience, and staying inside the household, then the groom feels more confident about her and will pay more. Similarly if the woman has borne children and has demonstrated her fertility, she is also worth more. Although some men know practically nothing about their wives to be, others investigate them and inquire into the reasons for previous marriage break-ups and so on. Was it because her previous husband beat her, or because she was an adulteress, or was excessively jealous of co-wives? Did she not perform her wifely duties properly, or show proper respect to her husband? Certainly some men like to know what kind of wife they are getting and this affects their willingness to pay bridewealth. However, it is not uncommon for a Kanuri man to say that he knew a particular wife for only a week, or perhaps just a day or two before they were married. In this case the woman's marital record is

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- 581 unimportant; instead the man considers other factors such as his need for a wife, the marriage expenses including the bridewealth, and the physical attractiveness of the woman.

583 The previous relationship of the groom to the girl and her family can vary the bridewealth enormously. Often the groom, and/or his family, are acquainted with the girl, and/or her family, as neighbors and friends. When this is the case, then other factors tend to enter in to determine the bridewealth. But in a number of special and not uncommon situations, the groom is released from the bulk of the bridewealth or it is substantially lowered. If the girl is his cousin (the Kanuri

[582] marry all cousins, although they claim it is not good to marry one's mother's sister's daughter) then he may find that only a small *sada'u* payment is necessary. About

[584] one-fifteenth of all Kanuri marriages are of this kind, and of these about one-fifth involve unions in which the little cousin was promised to the boy when she was an infant at the time that he was circumcised, roughly about puberty. At that time he becomes her *luwali* or the dispenser of her marriage rights and can arrange for her future husband or marry her himself when she reached puberty. In other cases the

583 groom is a dependent or client of the girl's *luwali* (usually her father) and the marriage tends to cement the relationship between him and the father even further.

581 Indeed many subordinates of "big men" in Bornu think of their superiors as being obliged to help them find a wife. In such a case the groom may assume only a small portion of the expenses, or the wife-to-be is a daughter or relative of the superior and the latter depresses the payments purposely, so his subordinate can marry. In a few cases girls are given to *mallams* (koranic teacher-priests) and no bridewealth is required. Such unions are called "marriages of charity" and the *luwali* who abrogates his rights to bridewealth in this fashion is considered to be a pious man. In actual practice it is not very common. This is seen in the marriage histories of the *mallams* themselves who may have married once in five or six times this way but rarely more than that. *Mallams* claim that they do not like it because it makes them obligated to the wife-giver for free prayers, constant officiating as a religious leader in the household of the *luwali*, and so on, so that they avoid such charity in order to maintain their independence. This avoidance is mitigated if they are already members of the *luwali's* household and the marriage is simply cementing the relationship.

583 The bargaining abilities on both sides of the marriage can also determine the bridewealth. The groom's representatives are told by the girl's family, through her *luwali*, that the groom can expect many gifts which will compensate for an elaborate and expensive wedding. The groom's representatives tell the woman and her relatives, especially her *luwali*, of the groom's qualities, especially his kindness and generosity, his wealth and expectations of more, his potentialities as a successful man, and his connection through friends, through his own services, and relatives to very important people. On his side, the *luwali* speaks of the benefits to be gained by marriage to this particular girl and slowly the bridewealth payment, especially the *luwaliram*, emerges at a set price. On her first wedding night, a previously unmarried girl also bargains at great length in order to bid up a special consummation fee that is her right.

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If the marriage arrangements take place in the autumn, or around harvest time, it is assumed that the man will have more cash than at other times. Thus the

40 THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

585 widespread throughout the Islamic world. However there is more to it than that—
 577 indeed it comes close to the heart of the Kanuri way of looking at things. Kanuri
 829 social life is a constant search for fruitful social contacts in which one man is the
 [571] superior and the other a subordinate to him. Between the sexes, the culture defines
 562 women as inferior in rank to men. Thus the place universally available to all men
 577 for the achievement of subordinates is the family and the household, and the ideal
 • 581 female subordinate is a young girl, one who has not yet been divorced, that is re-
 829 jected her subordination to her husband, and one whom the husband can train
 to become properly obedient to his own personal wishes. Thus marriage to a pre-
 viously unmarried girl symbolizes what every man wants, not sexually, but socially;
 unblemished and complete obedience from docile subordinates who receive material
 benefits in return for subordination. Seen in this light the marriage with young girls
 [183] then becomes more understandable for it represents some of the most profoundly
 important values in the society.

587 Most Kanuri do not, however, marry girls who have never been married be-
 fore. Generally they marry a *zower*—or divorced woman. This is carried out with
 much less ceremony than the virgin marriage. Men may see a divorced woman they
 like and simply send a friend who asks if she would like to marry. Or the men may
 begin an affair with her, give her market money once a week just as he would a
 wife, and then during this time decide whether or not he and this woman should
 [137] proceed towards a marriage. Such liaisons are considered formally to be illegal ex-
 tramarital relations, but in everyday life they are tolerated as a form of courtship.
 Harsh approbation is directed toward sexual relations by a man with another man's
 wife. Thus although a very few men claim to remain chaste in their relations with
 a divorced woman, most men agree that there is nothing seriously the matter with a
 discreet affair with such a person.

583 As Muslims the Kanuri also think of marriage as a relationship involving
 582 more or less *purdah*, or wifely confinement within the household. Generally, it is
 made quite clear before the marriage begins just how much constraint the husband
 expects. And for the most part such restrictions are positively related to the class
 [554] and status of the husband. Thus the higher the status of the husband, the greater
 the probability of almost total confinement on the part of the wife. Certainly all
 Kanuri men would like their wives to remain inside the compound, however very
 few can afford to insist. To do so necessitates that there must be a well inside the
 compound, enough wealth so that the husband does not require the wife's work in
 the fields, and enough help so that he can send a male servant or client along with
 her on the few occasions when it becomes absolutely necessary for her to go out.

582 The Kanuri themselves categorize a few other forms of marriage on the
 basis of the relations already existing between the partners, or being set up by the
 marriage. They speak of cousin marriage, marriage with a religious practitioner,
 marriage with a wealthy or powerful person (a marriage of pleasure) as varieties
 587 of unions. They also mention the possibility of the sororate (marriage with a per-
 son called sister by one's dead wife) and the levirate (marriage by the younger
 brother of his dead brother's wife or wives). These latter are quite rare, and I have
 only recorded one case of the levirate in the last ten years, and none of the sororate.
 595 Kanuri think marriage with wife's sister, or person she calls sister while she is still

alive (sororal polygyny) is an awesome idea, for it implies the sororate to them or wish for the death of a present wife. 595

In a few upper class households there are concubines who have the status of female slaves. These act as servants to the wives of the household and are used by the household head as sexual partners "any time you ask," as one informant put it. They are spoken of as being "half a wife." This refers to the fact that the husband gives them one half the amount of everything given to a wife. Generally they are too low in status to compete with the wives of the household unless they are considered exceptionally beautiful, or if they have given birth while the wife has not, and the child is recognized as that of the concubine. One informant very clearly explained his possession of concubines in economic terms. His household, he said, was very large, and he regularly fed twenty to forty people per day. This figure often increased to fifty or sixty on special occasions. The work of preparing so much food on time and regularly was simply too much for his wives, so he always has a number of concubines to help with the catering problems associated with his high status in the community. 595
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Why do men want to get married? In answering this question men constantly reiterate cooking, food producing, and child-bearing. Cooking—to the unmarried man—is a most important point. Men never cook and if a man has no wife he must eat his food in the household of a relative or neighbor who is already married. This produces obligations by the unmarried man towards the married men which must be repaid with some service such as farm labor or running messages which signifies subordination. Thus a man with a wife can create obligation among unmarried men or at least avoid becoming obliged in this way to others. This is not, of course, the whole story. Women are also prized for their work in the fields. Indeed men estimate an annual increase or decrease in crop yield by referring, among other things, to the loss or gain of a wife. 581
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Women on the other hand want wealth, although they often want freedom as well and more power in marriage than the culture allows for. This leads to trouble. But before we go into marriage itself, let us look at an actual case in which a man decides to marry.

Modu was twenty-six years old. He had been married twice; once for a period of nine months, then divorced and single again, then married a second time for a year and a half. In this he is no different from the vast majority (as high as eighty to ninety percent) of young Kanuri men his age. Now he was single again and living next door to his older-half-brother at whose house he was eating his meals. He wanted to take a wife and become independent of his older brother. He chose a new woman in the village about the same age as himself. She was visiting her elder brother who was a minor official in the district court. Minor though he was, his family was well-to-do and Modu was but a country peasant. The woman was beautiful and rather more sophisticated than local country girls, coming as she did from the city. Modu thought her most attractive in every way, even though gossip had it she had been married six or seven times. 58
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Despite the gossip he decided to try and marry her, feeling that her past reputation made her available to the likes of him and not too costly in terms of bride-wealth. Late one afternoon he sent over some kola nuts using an intermediary: 589
often people use old women for such purposes.

to seniors, first in the household then in the society at large, that is the most important social learning of childhood. Kanuri society is hierarchical. Whether the person is in one compound or another, one social situation or another, there is always one common feature—rank and its determinants, power and authority. By living in several compounds, by seeing authority at work in the community, and by learning to generalize his response to authority, the young child learns to respond easily and gracefully to many combinations of rank and position. His counterpart in western society may be learning how to cope with the intricacies of modern urban technology, but he would certainly be no match for his Kanuri counterpart in the diplomacy necessary in dealing with superiors.

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Puberty

Puberty is not an age-grade in the same sense as childhood or adolescence. Yet it deserves some special attention because it is a marker that separates these two life periods and creates a means for very important transitions especially for young girls. Sometime between the age of twelve and fourteen most girls undergo their first marriage. Boys on the other hand begin their adolescence. This is a more care-free time for them than the period of intense training for adulthood that a girl is suddenly confronted with as she moves from childhood into her teenage period and marriage.

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However there are no absolutely sharp breaks even for a girl. A newly married young girl is not considered totally grown-up and sometimes she continues to wear her hair in the childhood style. If she divorces during this early period, usually the first three or four years after her first marriage, people often speak of her as *njim suri* or one who is only beginning to become a woman but who has not completed the change-over to full adulthood.¹ At first the young wife still sees many unmarried childhood friends who will soon be getting married themselves. They visit her when she is confined to the house for varying periods depending upon how secluded her husband wishes his wife to be. Only gradually over the period of the first year or so of marriage does the young girl begin to participate fully as a wife. From the first she cooks food regularly because it is her duty and her right, and as time goes on she is seen more and more in the company of the older, adult women of the compound and the neighborhood. If she is not in total seclusion, like most rural wives, then she can be seen going with the women to the well or the market, and to women's festivities in the village.

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Although rare it sometimes happens that a girl misses the opportunity to marry while still in her early teens. Leaving aside the very few girls who go on in school, such cases are rather tragic. The girl is either mentally deficient or a disturbed person, or one who people say has been having love affairs before marriage. In such cases she changes her hair style in her middle to late teens and takes on the role of a single divorced woman seeking a new husband and therefore open to courtship and sexual liaisons with men.

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In Magumeri one young girl about fifteen or sixteen who was well de-

¹ Literally *njim suri* means to have seen inside the hut, that is she has been alone with her husband but only seen or glimpsed at the activities of adulthood not really practiced them in full.

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64 • THE LIFE CYCLE

882 developed physically had not yet married. There were many rumors and much gossip
 883 to the effect that she was no longer a virgin and that men of the town slept with
 • 581 her. Her father, it was said, would have a hard time arranging her first marriage.
 156 The girl herself seemed to be suffering increasingly from her inability to see herself
 in the role of a child awaiting marriage instead of that of a developing young mat-
 ron—the role now common among her young age mates. Thus in order to take up
 a normal position in society, girls are supposed to have their first marriages in and
 around the time of puberty. Failure to do so indicates a deviant and degrading de-
 velopment. This is the reason why almost all Bornu men say that girls who go on
 883 in the educational system are "spoiled" and should never be allowed to stay in
 882 school beyond the traditional age of marriage. The girls in school see the matter
 871 differently; the situation remains today one of tension, with the majority against
 578 education for girls, and the schools themselves looking for students and preaching
 a somewhat different attitude toward a girl's adolescence than that held tradition-
 ally by the people.

882 Another point should also be noted. Most girls have very little choice, if
 883 any, in their first marriage arrangements. If they are very drastically opposed to the
 584 union, their views are considered since parents are afraid they might behave badly
 as young wives. However they are traditionally supposed to respect the wishes
 of their parents and comply with their demands. Indeed many Kanuri, both men
 and women, know very little about their first marriage arrangements at all since
 these are almost entirely made by their parents or the head of the compound they
 are living in at the time. It should also be realized that many Kanuri girls marry
 for the first time with men sometimes as much as two, three, and even four times
 their own age which enhances the traditional seniority of the husband as well as
 taking any "romance" out of it for the girls.

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 [304] Sometime around the end of childhood and into the beginning of the teen-
 age period young boys are circumcized. This event is fundamentally a ceremonial
 occasion and is thus related only in a rough general way to the actual onset of pu-
 berty for each boy. Generally speaking boys are cut in groups, although in rural
 areas it is not uncommon to see a family performing the ceremony for just one boy
 [591] in the household. On the other hand circumcision among high-ranking people such
 as village heads, district heads, members of the royal family, or rich traders in the
 city attracts many other families who try to have their own children cut at the same
 time to participate in the large festivities. Usually the higher the rank of the lead-
 ing families involved in a circumcision the greater the number of boys who are
 likely to be cut at the same time.

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 571 The important thing is not the readiness of the boy. Rather it is the auspi-
 ciousness of the occasion in terms of the family's relationship to the rest of the
 community. Is there a large circumcision taking place this year? Are a large number
 of friends and relatives asking when little Abba Gana is going to be circumcized?
 Have the household members, especially the household head, attended a great many
 marriage or naming ceremonies? Have other community members been given gifts
 on these occasions? Is it not time to reap the benefit of all this participation by
 having a ceremony of one's own to which many people will come and bring gifts
 of food, clothing, and money for the family and the boy? These and similar ques-
 tions are the determining factors in the timing of the circumcision ceremony, and

posed to divorce so often; he is not supposed to have liaisons with divorced women, and he is supposed to behave in a judicious manner as one of the leading members of his community. Thus many young married men living in or near the compound of an older relative or some non-relative, who might be a political and economic superior, refused to be called mature even when they were married. They claimed that they were still young men and that they had still some way to go before they could be called mature adults. Carrying this point further, men whose occupation required that they remain in close subordinate relationship to a superior for most of their lives limited the application of the word "mature" to themselves, and did so rather proudly. For example, one man of about forty-five, whose father had been a servant of the district head's father and who was himself a lifelong servant of the district head of Magumeri, accepted a definition of himself in general as a mature man. Indeed he said, laughingly, he would soon be an old man. He explained that he was mature because he had a married daughter, a farm, a nice compound, a wife who he asserted proudly had stayed with him for eight years, and for all these reasons he thought he should be dubbed "mature." When asked in the same context if he would ever go to live somewhere independently of his district head without the latter's instructions, he quickly replied, "Oh no! In that sense, I am still a small boy." This was in no way shameful for him since his recognition in the community and his status in the society as a whole stands upon his subordinate relationship to the district head.

There is no similar status term among women comparable to the male term for the mature man whose meaning also embodies the same ideology of adult behavior. The woman who has had a child can be referred to by a special term that indicates that she has achieved the important goal of motherhood and added a new member to her husband's household and to both of their families. Middle-aged women can be referred to by another term which distinguishes them from younger woman and from old women whether or not they have given birth to children. In practice such terms are not observed in common use, the woman's status and age being described in other terms.

Ideally an adult woman should be married and should desire to remain so. She should be obedient to her husband, have and want children, and perform her womanly tasks promptly and efficiently while remaining chaste within the walls of her husband's compound, leaving it only when absolutely necessary. She should, however, maintain contact with her own family and return there for important family ceremonies. As one would expect, those who come closest to this ideal in their own behavior often tend to agree with this image of womanly perfection and give it their unqualified support. However those who divorce often and easily tend to qualify their agreement. Thus in answer to the question, "What would you do if your husband demanded you always stay inside the compound?" a woman who had been married to the same man for twenty-five years answered simply, "He is the head of the household," meaning "I must obey." Contrarily, a woman who at the age of thirty-five had been married and divorced four times replied, "Then I would make him divorce me. I would leave him immediately."

While men who are unmarried or between marriages live very similar lives to married men, divorced women are striking in their contrast to their married sisters. A married woman among the Kanuri is tied to her husband's household and

885 must ask his permission to do anything. To be seen speaking to another man is
 581 grounds for divorce. On the other hand a divorced woman is free. She comes and
 586 goes as she pleases and speaks to whoever she pleases quite freely. Some women
 quite frankly remark that they prefer this status to that of marriage while others
 just as strongly remark that they would like to get a husband.

885 In summary, maturity is a time of achievement for men in which they be-
 105 come full-fledged members of their community. They marry, try to raise families,
 156 and become heads of successful and productive households. Women try to marry
 562 successfully and hopefully to have children. However, as I have pointed out else-
 182 where, tensions caused by the demands of subordination in their married role pro-
 578 duce strains and rebelliousness that very often leads to the break-up of marriage.*

In the final analysis the culture is androcentric; there are many means by which
 men can become successful—through their occupation, their associations with
 neighbors, relatives, friends, and important men and through membership and
 finally headship of a household. In spite of a turnover in wives associated with the
 high amount of divorce, the household itself is a stable unit, although its personnel
 is not. On the other hand, it is the rare Kanuri woman who can achieve a success-
 ful adulthood. Many women are barren or have had children who have not sur-
 vived. Very few women remain married to the same men all their lives and most
 have had one or more extended periods of being divorced and looking for a hus-
 band. By centering on men and emphasizing their needs and wishes, Kanuri culture
 has produced a strain on women that is a fertile field for changes when moderniza-
 tion produces the possibility of new goals for women and new means for achieving
 them.

Old Age

886 Old age is signalled in both sexes by the whitening of body hair even
 888 though other body characteristics may remain strong and healthy. For both old men
 826 and women this last period in life means that many of the obligations and respon-
 sibilities of adult life are slowly relinquished, although men generally feel that they
 belong to the adult roles much longer than women. As heads of households and
 office holders in governmental positions, men wield powers in a number of spheres
 and give these up slowly and reluctantly as old age drains away their energy and
 efficiency. Ideally in Kanuri culture a man should reach the golden years of his life
 in his old age. If all goes well he receives much respect; his work is carried on by
 descendants, and his position as a household head may have grown to the point
 where he is the senior authority among a group of households organized along the
 lines of a patrilocal extended family with clients, sons, brothers, and their wives
 and families looking to him for leadership. When he is very old and becoming
 progressively infirm, he lets many of these duties pass to mature members of the
 group. Even then they always consult him on decisions and pay heed to his wishes.

888 The reality in Kanuri society is often far from the ideal although the ideal is a
 183 very widely agreed upon goal. To obtain this most desirable position in old age a
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* See Ronald Cohen, "Marriage instability among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63, 1231-1249.

584 obstacle to such a marriage is the bride-price, which will be
565 high for a daughter of a good family. The father of a boy of
good family, conversely, may arrange to have his son marry the
daughter of a talaka if he likes the girl, particularly if she
is very pretty. A talaka will not usually arrange for the mar-
riage of his son with the daughter of a very rich man (a wealthy
trader, for example), because the girl will eventually inherit
wealth and her husband will have no claim to it, nor will the
boy's father ever see any of it. However, a talaka father may
584 arrange for his son to marry the daughter of a kantuoma (aris-
565 tocrat) family in order for his son to benefit from his future
557 father-in-law's influence in obtaining power, though the boy's
own father will not himself directly benefit from the marriage.

- 581 The qualities desired in a kalo yaska spouse are as fol-
lows: a pretty girl is highly desirable in marriage; a girl
with a nasty temper, one who curses people or has other unde-
sirable personality characteristics (such as shamelessness--
nunqu ba) will not find a husband so easily. A pretty girl is
better than a wealthy one, but better still is industriousness
and willingness to work hard. Being able to cook well is also
more important than beauty. If the father of a boy has two
girls to choose from as brides for his son, one pretty and the
other industrious and skillful, he will prefer the industrious
584 one for his son. If a girl does not like the boy suggested for
her by her father, if she thinks him ugly, the marriage will not
take place. The father of the girl will ask her if she likes the

587 of the wife, in numbers, bring her clothing and belongings through the streets to her new husband's home. Later that night the bride herself comes, accompanied by her very close friend (kususu). There is no ceremony corresponding to that which takes place when a virgin marries. The following day, her friends cook the morning meal for her. After that, she cooks her own food. A man with a previous wife who marries a zogor will sleep with his new wife for three consecutive days. After the three initial days, he spends one night with each wife in regular rotation, as is the normal practice of a man with more than one wife.

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Bachelors are very rare. The primary informant in this area, Ya Mogorom, a woman of about fifty who is herself a grandmother several times, could not think of a single adult male who had never married, though she said that it did occasionally occur. Spinsters are just as rare, and Ya Mogorom could name only a sixteen year old girl who was not yet married as an ex-

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ample of an adult female who had never married. Common-law marriages as such do not occur. A woman living with a man but not married to him is his nomqantem, and is quite distinct from his wife as she never cooks for him. Until the age of fifty a zogor will remarry; beyond that she does not attempt to remarry. A man will remarry as long as he is able to have intercourse.

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Sometimes old people marry for convenience, after they can no longer have intercourse. She cooks his food, and he provides her with clothing and other things.

595 sistent cause of trouble within the household and that he must divorce her. If the situation cannot be remedied, the husband will divorce the wife who is the cause of the difficulty. If there are only two wives in the household and they quarrel, the husband attempts to settle their disputes, though if they continue the husband may divorce one or the other.

593 The primary responsibility of the husband is to support
595 his wives and children. The wives in turn cook the food and prepare meals for their husband. Each wife prepares the meals for her husband on the day when it becomes her turn to sleep with him. This task is central to the well-being of a household, and to continued pleasant relations between husband and wife. Among the highest virtues stressed in a future bride are her abilities as a cook. In addition, the wives as a group prepare all the food for other household members, for visitors, and for others who regularly come to eat with a particular household. This frequently requires a great deal of work, particularly in pounding, sifting and grinding millet. The senior wife supervises food preparation of this kind, and distributes tasks to her co-wives which they perform under her direction.

[302] Each week the husband gives his wife market money to buy food for the week, and in addition he gives her a small sum to buy kola nuts (goro) and tobacco buds (fale) which she uses to stain her teeth. If he is a good husband he buys her clothes, and gives her gifts of jewelry. In all these things a husband must treat each wife alike. Each must receive the same amount

[431]

- 322 -

[GLIDAM]

177 a Yoruba woman. The Kabuna are an intermediate group, and
582 show little variability in their preferences. The Craftsmen
186 are very consistent in their resistance to marriage with wom-
163 en of any of the tribes offered to them. The Talaka on the
146 other hand show a wide variation in their attitudes towards
165 the four tribes. They are almost unanimous (88 per cent) in
their objection to marriage with a Fulani woman, but one half
[36] would marry a Babur woman. Presumably urban versus rural fac-
tors and the degree of acculturation towards Kanuri culture
which the Babur have demonstrated would lead Talaka to favor
* [554] the Babur and oppose the Fulani. The Low-status Individuals
are the only completely unanimous group in this respect. None
of them would marry women from any of the four tribes offered
to them.

177 Another aspect of marriage is willingness to marry an edu-
581 cated woman. Responses to the question: would you marry a
182 Kanuri woman who had gone to school and who spoke English, are
presented in Table XXXVI. Most people (73 per cent) said that
they would marry an educated woman. Reasons offered for marry-
ing such a woman mention the usefulness of a knowledge of Eng-
lish and the money which a wife of that sort could earn. Two
people note that they would marry such a wife only if she prayed
regularly, implying that Western education is often accompanied
by a decline in piety and the practice of religious ritual. In
opposing marriage with such a woman, people state that an edu-
cated wife would be a better and more accomplished person than

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 324)

[GEIDAM]

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Table XXXVI

- *177 26. Marrying an educated woman: would you marry a woman who
 • 581 had gone to school and who spoke English?
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	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Aristocracy	3	2
Koranic Malams	2	1
Canteen operators	6	-
NA Malams	4	2
Kabuna	4	2
Craftsmen	4	2
Talaka	6	2
Low-status Individuals	3	1
Totals:	32	12

Reasons given in support of marrying such a wife:

NA Malam: "Better than anything else. She can help me in writing."

Talaka: "A woman who speaks English can bring money."

Talaka: "I would learn English from my wife."

Qualifications:

Two said that they would marry such a wife, but only if she prays.

Reasons given in opposing such a marriage:

Aristocrat: "No. She would write letters to other people."

Kabuna: "She would be better than me. She would send letters elsewhere."

Talaka: "No. If you marry her she'll speak badly to you, curse you. My power is slight."

Low-status individual: "No. I'm afraid to."

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[GEIDAM]

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[W] her husband (the respondent) and this would subvert his authority within the family. This is expressed as a fear that through her superior knowledge she would be able to commit adultery, while her ignorant husband would be powerless to stop her. The groups hardly differ among themselves at all in their answers to this question, except that the Canteen Operators are the sole group which unanimously indicated a willingness to marry an educated woman.

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829
A related question asks if a wife would be permitted to work as a school-teacher or a dispenser (Table XXXVII). The question implies, of course, that one is married to an educated woman. Approximately the same number of people responded that they would permit their wives to work (70 per cent) as had said that they would marry an educated woman (Table XXXVI). Several mentioned the wife's salary as an advantage in having a working wife (*f, *g); one brought up the issue of adultery again (*d) implying that an educated woman who worked would be less under her husband's control. Eleven individuals (25 per cent) said that they would refuse to allow their wives to go out and work. Some stated simply that they would not allow it (*e), while others claimed that she would not be as good a wife if she went to work (*c). Two others noted that they would allow their wife to work under certain circumstances and would forbid it under other circumstances (*a, *b).

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In discussing this matter, the idea of keeping one's wife secluded (kule) must be taken into account. Though only a rel-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 326]

CHAPTER V

[p. 99]

Marriage Relations

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Kanuri marriages are virilocal from the point of view of the woman, which means that she always leaves her residence to live in the compound of her husband. From the point of view of the man, marriages are patrilocal or neolocal. Thus a man either brings his wife to the compound of his father or very close to it, or else takes his wife to a new residence away from the residences of both their kin groups. Thirty-eight out of sixty-one informants in Magumeri reported bringing their first wives to the house of their own father or setting up a contiguous compound. For successive wives the number dropped to about one-half of those asked.

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The inception of the first marriage for young girls is decided upon by her family and chiefly among these her luwali or guardian, who is most commonly the head of the household in which the girl is living at the time of her marriage. A luwali can stand in various relational positions to the young girl - he may be her father, her elder brother, her cross-cousin, or patrilineal parallel-cousin, or adoptive parent. When the household head is not the luwali, which can occur for example in the case of cousin wardship, then the luwali still has the rights of marriage dispensation over the girl. Indeed he would take anyone to court who tried to inveigle these rights away from him. Although such cases are known they are quite rare.

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The luwali's choice of potential husband is based on the availability of males seeking virgin wives plus his desire to create profitable relationships for himself. If he is a high status person, his wife-giving rights will be used most commonly to tie political and/or

(1) C.F., "lugali" in Ellison, R.E., Marriage and Childbirth Among the Kanuri, Africa; Vol. 9, 1936, pp. 524-535.

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429 economic subordinates more closely to the exercise of his power and authority. In cases where this is less of a consideration (e.g. in marriages between peasant households) then the sheer economic benefit of the marriage to the luwali becomes the primary determinant in the decision. Among peasants it is not considered desirable to marry with traditionally regarded low status persons (male or female speaking) such as drummers-entertainers, slaves, butchers, blacksmiths, tanners, petty brokers, or anyone whose birth is considered illegitimate. (conceived out [848] of wedlock). This results in a certain amount of endogamy among these occupation groups excluding illegitimates who are pariahs in the eyes of all.

582 Kanuri marriages are governed by the following rules of incest.. Marriages with parents or their siblings, own full or half siblings are forbidden, and this rule carries over to compounds into which ego's parents have remarried where no real biological relationship with ego's parent's new spouse's children obtains. It is culturally prescribed that ego (a male) may not marry a matrilineal parallel cousin, although several upper class informants felt that this was a custom of the people and not a Muslim ordinance. No marriages of the latter variety were observed during the field research. It is considered wrong (i.e. shameful) to marry wives of consanguinal kin of any generation after they have divorced ego's kin member. No reason was given for this rule, but no exceptions to its practice were observed.

It is considered inappropriate for a man to marry a woman older than himself. But age is known in only a vague general way and most men claim they are married to women younger than themselves.

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589 During his adolescence and increasingly so as he grows older, a young man strikes up liaisons with divorced women who are looking for

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[589] husbands. These women (zower) are sexually available to all men, and are given gifts and market money for the sexual privileges they grant.

The typical adolescent male has his first sexual experiences with a woman 582 an older than himself. However, when he decides to marry he usually tries to find a woman of roughly his own or of a junior age group.

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581 First marriage marks the beginning of adult status for a man. The event announces and enables a move towards semi-independence which is aided and abetted by the avoidance relation between his father and his wife, as well as by the subject-matter avoidance of his marriage in conversations with his parents. Furthermore, he now commands an independent source of cooked food, which he can use for hospitality and its return, whereas previously he was obliged to others for this service. Kanuri males consider this to be one of the most important reasons for getting married, especially at the lower ranks of society.

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437 To understand the value placed on this function of marriage it must be realized that men from about the age of fifteen or sixteen onwards like to eat in the company of other men. Without a wife, a young man must join a group of eaters one (or more) of whose wives prepare the food. For this privilege he is obligated to the food provider, an obligation which may include hoeing his farm, going on messages for him, helping him repair his compound, etc. With a wife a young man can return eating favours on the same terms, thus equating himself to his hosts and creating obligation (a) for return meals from men who have wives, and (b) 581 of a diffuse nature from men who have none. It will be shown later that a wife is also valued as a socio-economic asset in the determination of her husband's productive capacities.

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434 Today, almost all men in rural areas, and many in the city, derive some of the money for marriage from the cash crop. This determines

583 A man who started using his wife's dowry without
593 her knowledge and con-
[586] sent would have a fine argument on his hands immediately and most prob-
[685] ably a divorce proceeding. One mother turned her young adolescent son
156 over to a judge for a whipping because he took one of the enamel plates
583 from her dowry to sell for cash. A woman's concept of her own personal
worth is tied closely to her dowry. During her youth, it is the material
expression of her relationship to her own family background. Later, as
her independence grows and she adds to the dowry, she looks on it more
as her personal property, her savings, which give her a measure of value
[585] in her immediate society. She can say of herself that she has 250 enamel
dishes, while her younger co-wife has only 125.

• 581 The Kanuri recognize different varieties of marriage and
have separate terms for each of them. Whether these are in fact dif-
ferent forms is a question of interpretation which will be discussed
later.

The first and most important distinction about a marriage
concerns the virgin status of the woman. This consequently divides all
marriages into two broad categories depending upon whether or not the
female has ever been married before. If she has, the marriage is descri-
bed as kamu gwojin (he takes a woman). Conversely, if the female is a
virgin, the union is termed a fero gwojin (he takes a girl or virgin).
All informants agreed that union with a virgin is the most highly valued
form of marriage in their society. They explained this by pointing to
the chaste state of the girl. She is not used, they say, and this is
[832] good. However it should be noted that informants were also agreed that
virgin girls were not sexually exciting or attractive. One informant,
a man of about forty years of age was observed in almost constant prayer
for a whole week preparing for his first night of virgin marriage which
very nearly ended in failure, only succeeding on the second attempt with
the aid of magical devices.

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As a man and woman grow older they demand and are given progressively more independence of choice in all matters including marriage. This is more likely among the peasants. For here second marriages are not as likely to be used as mechanisms for creating, strengthening and maintaining relationship by the girl's luwali to whom it is traditional to return on the occasion of divorce. It is more likely that the upper class woman will come under the power and authority of her luwali in subsequent marriages than the lower class person who is left freer to make her own liaisons. The upper class woman although not in purda during her divorced status must be much more delicate and restrained about her movements. This necessity to maintain an appearance of probity lends itself more easily to the manipulation of the upper class woman by her luwali after her first one or two divorces than does the relative freedom of the lower class woman. Among all classes an extremely young divorcee of under fifteen is almost sure to have little freedom of choice for her second husband, although cases of such early divorce are rare.

During the harvest season (November to February) divorced women (sower) are more serious about trying to pin down one of the temporary liaisons to marriage. Men at this season are similarly inclined but tend to shop around a little before settling on one choice, unless their minds were made up before the harvest season opened. With a few exceptions (notably female) both sexes consider married status desirable and for a man, having two wives is better than having one. The exceptions to this rule are women who are either very attractive to men and thus enjoy themselves economically and sexually as unmarried women, and/or women who refuse to give up their independence for marriage. These factors are often related and as we shall see there is room for the expression of all of them within marriage. Men marry if their harvest

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583 Men marry if their harvest
587 money holds out longer than their shopping, and their aspirations fit their resources. Generally speaking men can obtain a wife within their price range. The variation in expense for marriage with a divorced woman is large, but is lower than a virgin marriage at any one level in the society. The entire affair can cost as low as two to four pounds (\$5.60 to \$11.20 in 1955-7) or approximately 11% of the smallest annual income recorded (twenty-seven pounds in cash and kind). The number of times a woman has been married and her class status determine the extent of the
587 bridewealth. One informant, a man of about 33, married a woman of similar age. The entire bridewealth did not exceed four pounds in value even though the woman was fairly "well-connected". Her father's brother, with whom she was visiting at the time of the marriage, was a court official in the District Headquarters, and she herself was an urban woman. The informant stated that the bridewealth was to be very small because, "She had been used very much", i.e. she had been married and divorced many times. This meant that her services and favours had been granted to many others, and that she was prone to this kind of behaviour. Thus, no very good assurances could be given from past performances that the projected marriage would last very long (the informant divorced her five and a half months after the wedding). Therefore no great investment in her as wife could be made.

- 581 Men desire wives primarily for their cooking and food-producing skills, although other factors such as culturally prescribed propriety, sexual abilities, personality attributes, family background etc. all play a part in the choice of any particular woman. Some men also claimed that they would prefer to marry high ranking, rather than wealthy women, if forced to choose between these two qualities. Women generally replied in the reverse, i.e. they would prefer to marry wealthy rather

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than high ranking men, if they had to choose between these two attributes in a husband. This type of distinction was more easily elicited from urban persons or upper class informants than from rural peasants, who only discuss such a question in a fantasy-like conversation which many are not willing to do. Lower class informants in the rural areas often refused to consider questions about whether they would like to marry wealth or rank answering only "andi tala" (we are peasants or commoners).

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Crosscutting the foregoing classification of marriage with virgins or non-virgins are several subclassifications which describe in a somewhat sharper fashion the nature of the relationships involved in the contraction of the marriage.

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According to custom any variety of marriage may be a nyia kulle, a marriage of seclusion or partial seclusion. In practice, this kind of marriage is almost totally restricted to the upper classes and usually implies only a partial seclusion. The woman may go out to visit under cover of darkness and escorted, or may even go out of the compound during the day, again escorted, for some very special reason such as a rite de passage ceremony which she is obligated to attend. One very high ranking District Head claimed that his senior wife, who had been married to him for many years, had never been out of his compound except when he changed Districts, and once when he had arranged an escorted trip to Mecca for her.

Women of this kind are exempt from any of the ordinary wifely duties which take them beyond the compound walls, such as getting water at a public well, or helping on the farm, etc. It is no wonder then that such marriages are almost totally restricted to the households of the higher ranks of society. No man wishes his wife to be seen excessively in public. However it is only the rich and powerful who can afford

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565 the luxury of female seclusion to the degree that their wives' only functions are sexual intercourse, raising children, and preparing food. Generally speaking women value the higher status conferred by such marriages. However one woman in Magumeri felt that she had very little social life and complained of loneliness. She claimed that a secluded marriage in the city is preferable because there are more women of her class to visit her and more special events for her to attend.

582 The Kanuri practise preferential cousin marriage (nyia durbe). Such unions are possible with the offspring of father's brothers and sisters, and mother's brothers. Interview material and genealogical data indicate that roughly 1/4 of all males questioned have married a cousin at some time. However most males marry from three to six times during their lives which reduces the incidence to about 1/20 of all marriages contracted. No person questioned had ever married more than one of his available cousins. Most of these were older men between the ages of 45 and 60, although two younger unmarried males stated that they intended to marry a cousin.⁽¹⁾

582 For the most part the older men who had practised preferential
565 marriage were either upper class members or connected to patrilocal
596 tended family groupings with fairly long associations to the household unit in which they lived. Although they could not give the names of their third and fourth ascendant generation members, long since dead, they knew that these had lived in this same place. The evidence therefore points to a higher incidence of cousin marriage in relation to upper class status and settled patrilocal family life in one locality.

- (1) Both of these men married in 1957, one to the expected cousin, the other to a high ranking official's daughter. The one who married his cousin had a higher social status to begin with than the one who did not.

587 independent and dominated the marriage completely. A situation she
567 found easier because of her cousin's low status and his general tim-
593 idity as a person.

582 One of the primary functions of cousin marriage is its main-
tenance and strengthening of already existing relationships. One in-
formant exemplified this generalisation by saying that he wanted to
practise cousin marriage because the girl was his karami (younger sib-
ling), the daughter of his Fa-Ol-Bro. Therefore she would never tell
embarrassing things about him or complain of him outside his own group.

(602) This results from the fact that her agnatic relations, to whom she
would presumably gossip, are his as well. In other words, by contract-
ing this kind of marriage the informant was avoiding any intimate re-
lations with an agnatic group other than his own, and he liked the idea.
All informants agreed upon the tougher texture of such marriages. One
informant explained that he was marrying his cousin (his Fa-Bro-Da) so
that he could maintain close relations to his parents with whom he had
(606) ceased to live. He said that his father, although he could ordinarily
never enter a hut alone with his son's wife, could now do so because
she was also his brother's daughter. The same thing occurs in other
marriage taboos with in-laws. Thus the restrictions on marriage behav-
iour are relaxed, and the total amount of interaction among the affines
is much greater and friendlier while no new relationships are created.

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582 In practice, although universal lip-service is paid to the
desirability of cousin marriage, its low incidence indicates its low
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popularity among a majority of the people. In discussing the matter

(178) (1) The nature of cousin marriage contraction, i.e. at puberty ceremon-
ies, plus the fact that it is mostly from older men that records
of cousin marriages are obtained, suggests that this custom has been
declining in practice in the last two decades.

581 In discussing the matter
 582 further, informants always point out the relative difficulty of divorce
 607 in such marriages as well as the lack of personal independence. The woman's relatives, who are also ego's (male speaking), always try to patch up the differences between her and ego, and scold him for not being "good" to his little sister. On the other hand, the move towards semi-independence, signalled by marriage, is restricted by cousin marriage. In-law avoidance which draws a man to his wife, and she to him as a social unit set apart from their own descent backgrounds, is much weakened in this kind of union, which makes it more difficult for a man to express any individual independence of his kin group.

582 The next type of marriage to be considered is the nyia kam
 557 rukatabe (marriage of pleasure). The expression means marriage to a man of wealth or high status, i.e. marriage with one of his daughters or with one of the girls over whom he has rights of marriage dispensation. The closer the girl comes to being the actual biological daughter of the wealthy and/or high ranking man, the more highly valued the marriage becomes. The term also describes marriage to a wealthy and/or high ranking woman.

One common form of this marriage occurs in the following manner. A person subservient to a powerful household head may need a wife and make this known to the household head, as he invariably does, along with all of his other requirements. The superior then give his subordinate a girl from among the marriageable girls of the household, to whom the household head stands in the relation of luwali. By so doing, the household head strengthens his ties with his subordinate by extending their relation to include father-in-law/son-in-law. (1) It will

(608) (1) Ego always behaves to his wife's luwali in the same manner as he does to his wife's biological father, whether the roles are occupied by the same person or not.

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the motivations of the luwali in giving his ward. It may be that the mallam is attached to a large household organization. Then the marriage very closely resembles the previous type, except that the marriage payments to the girl's kin are reduced or waived because of the cultural definition of such a marriage as a charitable act by the wife-giver.

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Again, a man may wish to express his gratitude to a mallam for supernatural aid in which the mallam utilized his special skills. This can result from medical aid, divination, or charms provided by the mallam. On the other hand, most individuals would be quite hesitant about refusing the request of a mallam for a girl, if such were made, because of the general awe in which he and his avowed supernatural powers are held in the public eye. For the same reason there is some anxiety connected to the giving of a girl to a mallam, for if anything should go wrong with the marriage and produce dissatisfaction on the part of the mallam, his powers of retaliation are very great.

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This does not mean that mallams themselves receive all their wives through charity. One informant of about thirty years of age was a peasant mallam, who farmed and lived in Magumeri. He wrote charms for people, and officiated in a minor way at the ceremonies in his immediate ward of town. He had been married six times, almost always to one wife at a time, with the exception of about a one year period when he had two wives in his compound. Of these six marriages only one had been a nyia sada'abe (a gift marriage). He said that he preferred to obtain his wives like any other man, then he would owe no one any special obligations.

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Nyia ardiabe (marriage by agreement) refers to marriages where the man and woman involved have a strong desire to marry one ano-

1. Age Differences

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[581] It is much simpler for the male to exercise control over the behaviour of very young girls, especially the young virgins of nine to thirteen years, when they are first married. This is another reason for the attractiveness of virgin marriage, for in this situation, the cultural ideal of male dominance is most possible. To a lesser extent because of the operation of other factors, large age differences between husband and wife, when the husband is the elder, make his dominant role more accessible. This is due to the general respect given to age in the society and may be one of the reasons behind the value placed upon the union of a man to a woman who is younger than himself.

2. Number of Marriages

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[183] As a woman increases the number of her divorces and experiences progressively more independence and freedom in her zower (divorced woman) status, it becomes more and more difficult for her to assume the submissive role required of her by her culture. As we have seen the amount a male is willing to pay for a woman decreases with the number of her past divorces, for he knows she has not had a past history of long term submission to one man, but rather a series of marriages which were broken by some disagreement between her and her husband. The number of her past divorces indicates her willingness in the past to break the marriage rather than submit to her husband's will or it represents her husband's dissatisfaction with her behaviour, which also points to her inability to conform to the cultural ideal of wifely virtue. Thus the number of divorces a woman has contracted is both a measure of her desire for independence and also a stimulus to the development of more independence, rather than submissiveness.

837 established small wards and hamlets are the bases of networks of re-
628 lationships among the males. Men tend to find extra-marital partners
in wards, hamlets, and towns other than their own, within the market-
ing community, since the women of their own ward or hamlet are usually
the wives of their close friends and relatives.

586 It must not be supposed from the above discussion that there
is any positive evaluation of divorce in Kanuri culture. On the con-
trary, long marriages are valued and divorce is considered by many to
[123] be a melancholy breakdown of relationship. Thus the writer was asked
on numerous occasions to use his prestige in the community in order
to re-unite separated couples.

• 581 This desire for long marriages is expressed ritually at the
585 formalization ceremony (sada'a) on the day of the marriage. After the
(1) fatiha prayer has been said by the assembled males, it is customary for
[829] the person who has been married the longest to stand up first. If a
European is present he fills the function, not because of his superior
status, but because European marriages are well known for their dura-
bility. Informants stated that this little ritual was an expression of
hope and a blessing on the present marriage for its long duration.

581 Personality factors, mutual affection and trust, prefer-
ential marriage, economic benefits, prestige accorded by the union to
either party and/or their families can all contribute to the stability
of marriage. Furthermore, it may be generalized that the longer the
term of marriage between a man and a woman, the greater the chance that
586 their marriage will continue. Most divorces seem to take place in the
first two years of marriage for non-virgin marriages, and after about
four to five years in the case of first marriages (of females).

(1) The first verse of the Koran.

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571 power and authority relations within the organization of each residence

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groupings. This brings us back to barsun, for where the members of a residence grouping are obtaining the proper receipts for their subservience, their discipline-respect, then no matter what structural cleavages and conflicts are present the organization remains intact. If, however, the subordinates in the residence association see themselves as not receiving enough for their discipline-respect, or envisage more desirable receipts elsewhere, either through independence or a transfer of their subordination, then cleavages in the residence structure emerge and the group splits up.

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The discussion of marriage has served to illustrate Kanuri attitudes and behaviour within contractual relations in which goods and services are exchanged between persons and groups. Bridewealth is given by the man and his group of relatives and friends to the girl and her group. The closer the marriage is to being the woman's first, the more likely it is that her luwali (dispenser of marriage rights) and kin [426] group take the bridewealth payments rather than the woman herself. Men borrow from relatives, friends, and superiors to obtain the money for marriage expenses. Thus a man's social relational network in Bornu is an important part of his capital reserve.

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The Kanuri classify marriages into two major categories, virgin or first marriage (female speaking) and marriage with a woman who has been married before. Marriages are further sub-divided on the basis [593] of the kinds of relationships established by the wedding. The relationship between the man and woman may entail the seclusion of the wife

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within the compound (nyia kulle). This is not strictly an either/or category but rather a matter of degree, since all Kanuri men like to see their wives remain in the compound as much as possible. However,

581 only the upper classes can afford to maintain and enforce such a re-
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[565] lationship. The remaining categories can be regrouped under two head-
ings.

581 Firstly, there are marriages in which a man obtains a wife
557 by virtue of his relationship to an extended household organization
and its head. The household head uses his luwali role (and in some
cases his influence over other luwali) either to strengthen or create
[582] obligatory relationships with other men. In some cases these unions
take the form of cousin marriages (nyia durbe). In others, they merely
emphasize already existing superior/subordinate relationships, while in
still others, they serve as the initiating circumstance for an attempt
[583] at such a relationship. As we have seen, gift marriage (nyia sada'abe)
in which a girl is given to a Koraniomallam also entails the mutual
understanding of an obligatory, subordination by the Mallam to the
luwali.

581 Secondly, in marriages of agreement (nyia ardiabe) and dis-
[584] covery (nyia kolstabe), the major arrangements are made between the
man and the woman alone without recourse or subordination to a house-
hold head. These marriages illustrate the adaptation of marriage
arrangements to the realities of Kanuri social life. Given the large
population and the high divorce rate it is not possible of feasible
for all weddings to function as mechanisms for strengthening and creat-
ing superior-subordinate relationships. And so this second variety of
marriage arrangement operates because many women, especially as they
grow older, are not willing to be pawns used for the purpose of defin-
ing relationships between men. By the same token, many are not willing
to become obligated to others through marriage.